general order to the effect that 66 feet. should be the distance within which approach to temples should be prohibited. There may be such a rule in respect of a particular temple.

136. Need for publishing a Proclamation conferring on the people of all classes the right of entry into all public places.

Mr. V. R. Kochunni Vaidyan (Member, Nominated) complained that Ezhavas and certain other classes of His Highness' subjects were not being allowed free access to all schools, streets, satroms, etc., and that it was necessary to publish a Proclamation allowing all classes of people free access to all public places. In view of the recent progress in education among the members of the Ezhava community which has given them a greater sense of self-respect, a mere statement from the Government that the disabilities of the community had been considerably reduced would not bring any satisfaction to them. Educated members belonging to other communities favoured the aspirations of the Ezhavas in this respect, as evidenced by the large number of signatories to the memorial presented by Mr. Padmanabha Pillai advocating the admission of Ezhavas into all temples. The Member, therefore, prayed that a Proclamation be issued as suggested above.

137. Disabilities arising from unapproachability and untouchability.

Mr. K. Kunju Panikkar (Member, Nominated) regretted that the answers elicited by interpellations in the Legislative Council in regard to the question of unapproachability and untouchability showed that Government did not fully realise the great awakening among all the depressed classes or the intensity of their feeling on this question. He prayed that the question be solved in the interests of the approacher among the various communities in this land and the healing up of their differences. The practice of unapproachability and untouchability now kept up was the greatest obstacle to the progress of the country and a bar to the enjoyment of full civic rights by the depressed classes. The institution of untouchability was most inhuman and superstitious, and the Government who educated the backward communities and made them think about their rights and self-respect should take early steps to do away with the institution. The Travancore Government was observing a policy of armed neutrality in the matter, stepping in at times when the rights of the privileged classes were reported to be infringed. One practical effect of keeping up the institution was to deny the backward communities entry into public temples. The enlightened members of other communities had, through newspapers and public meetings, shown their sympathy with the aspirations of the Ezhavas in this matter. He, therefore, requested that Government should go further on the policy pursued by them in respect of throwing roads and schools open to all classes and issue a Proclamation doing away with untouchability and unapproachability.

138. Social disabilities of non-Caste Hindus, with special reference to Ezhavas.

Mr. N. Kumaran Asan (Member, Nominated) said that, during the last session of the Assembly, the Dewan had replied that the creation of a Selection Board was engaging the attention of the Government with a view to give equal chances to all communities in the matter of entertainment in the public service, but that no announcement was made at the session of the current year regarding the constitution of the board. The Member prayed that Government might devote their best consideration to the matter and find out some means to satisfy the aspirations of all communities to enter the public service. He then dwelt on the desirability of throwing open all schools, satroms and public roads to all classes of people and said that the communities affected were, however, thankful to the Government for the sympathetic policy which was being pursued and requested that all restrictions in respect of these institutions and public roads might be removed.

As regards the question of admission to the temples, the Member was of opinion that the objection on religious grounds put forward by the Government was not sound.

Dewan's reply.—I am sorry that I cannot give you any other reply than what I gave to Messrs. Kunjuraman and Kittan in regard to the question of temple entry. In

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

regard to Notice Boards, I believe that the Government have been doing their utmost to find a solution and, if that does not satisfy you, I can only express my regret. Mr. Kunju Panikkar and the Member who spoke before him referred to untouchability and unapproachability. There is no law in Travancore which says that touching another is an offence in a place which is accessible to all. As to access to a particular place, that is a matter which is closely connected with temple entry and allied questions. With regard to that, I have given an answer already. But in a place which is accessible to everybody, such as schools, markets, public offices, highways, etc., I do not think that there is any rule or law which lays down that, if one person touches another without the intention to annoy or intimidate, it amounts to an offence. It is purely a social matter. I cannot see why you require a Proclamation to the effect that, if one person touches another, it is not an offence.

In regard to Government service, I have, in my address, referred to the question of a Selection Board. It has not been finally disposed of. The Government are feeling certain difficulties in the way of establishing such a board and they are examining the whole question in all its bearings. If after consideration Government decide that a Selection Board is the best solution of the matter, they will appoint one or more boards as may be found necessary. In the meantime, as I have told you already, we are watching the work of the departmental authorities. I have collected certain facts and figures to show how matters stand in regard to the representation of the various communities in the State service for the past seven years, including 1096, which I shall be glad to place before you, and if you peruse them, you will be convinced that instead of your community having been neglected, it has fared better in recent years, and especially in 1096.

In regard to throwing open satroms to all, you know that the policy of Government is, as far as possible, to make them accessible to all. That policy is being pursued with as much speed as possible.

The Assembly adjourned at 6 P. M.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly